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Senate Group Approves Helms as CIA Director

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By Chalmers M. Roberts
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The Senate Armed Services

Committee yesterday heaped praise on Richard McGarrah Helms and promptly voted to approve his appointment as the new Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The dapper and handsome 53-year-old Helms, who has been with CIA since its founding in 1947, is the first career man to head the supersecret agency.

All six Senators on hand yesterday praised Helms, whom most of them have known a long time since the CIA reports to a subgroup of Armed Services, both headed by Sen. Richard B. Russell (D-Ga.).

For the record, Sen. Leverett Saltonstall (R-Mass.), a member of the subgroup, gave Helms an opportunity to deny that the CIA indulges in making foreign policy. Helms replied that the agency had "never made any effort whatsoever to influence the President's decisions one way or another," that its job was to "present facts as objectively and straightforwardly as we can" to the decision makers.

Information Promised

He also said the CIA takes no action without "the appropriate approval of the appropriate officials of the Government." He told Saltonstall that he would give appropriate committees, as the Senator put it, "under the limits

imposed by the President, as they require and you think useful to them."

Russell later told newsmen that meant everything but sources and methods used by the CIA and money spent to gather information. The Senator reported that the Committee was unanimous in its approval and that the nomination would be reported Monday unless there was a request for a further hearing.

Helms said there is the "absolute minimum" of duplication between the CIA, of which he is now the Deputy Director, and the FBI and Secret Service. He also stated that American Ambassadors are in control of the CIA personnel overseas and that the CIA men "keep that Ambassador appropriately informed at all times."

Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) criticized the CIA's critics, praised Helms and said that American Ambassadors he visited overseas had told him they were pleased and satisfied with the CIA.

Suit Discussed

After a half-hour closed hearing with Helms, Russell was asked if the Committee had taken up the case of Jurgen Raus, a CIA operative being sued for slander for calling another man a Soviet secret agent in the United States. Raus has pleaded executive privilege.

Russell said that case had been discussed earlier with

outgoing CIA Director William F. Raborn, adding that "such a far-flung organization as this is going to have a goof now and then." The courts, he said, will have to determine how far executive privilege goes.

There was no discussion yesterday of the controversy over whether committee surveillance of the CIA should be broadened to include members of the Foreign Relations group. A Senate showdown is expected after the July 4 holiday recess, though Russell said he was prepared for it on

Monday. Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) said that a head count showed only 18 favoring the extension with 65 opposed and 17 others uncertain.



By Charles Del Vecchio, Staff Photographer

WINS APPROVAL — Richard M. Helms, 53, was approved yesterday by the Senate Armed Services Committee as the first career man to head the supersecret agency.